

PLATTSBURGH AIR FORCE BASE,  
MISSILE ASSEMBLY SHOP  
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 3578)  
Off Perimeter Road in Weapons Storage Area  
Plattsburgh  
Clinton County  
New York

HAER No. NY-326-AR

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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MISSILE ASSEMBLY SHOP  
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 3578)

HAER No. NY-326-AR

**Location:** Off Perimeter Road in Weapons Storage Area, Plattsburgh, Clinton County, New York.

UTM: 18.620940.494400

Quad: Plattsburgh, NY-VT, 1:24,000 (1966)

**Date of Construction:** 1956

**Architect:** Unknown

**Present Owner:** United States Air Force

**Present Use:** Vacant

**Significance:** Building No. 3578 provided 7,683 square feet of missile assembly shop space and 3,197 square feet of surveillance and inspection shop space. The missile assembly shop activity was associated with the short-range attack missile (SRAM) program, and provided for the transfer and preparation of missiles for operational use. It was also used for performing organizational-level maintenance involving component and subsystem replacement. The design and siting of the shop is standardized and is controlled by Air Force explosives quantity distance criteria. The surveillance and inspection shop activity included initial assembly, checkout, periodic inspection, and maintenance of nuclear weapons, missiles, and electro-optic (EO) and laser bomb guidance kits.

**Project Information:** Building 3578 at Plattsburgh Air Force Base (AFB) is being documented in accordance with HAER standards to mitigate for the potential adverse effects of transferring deed of title to the property from federal ownership. The property transfer is a result of the disposal and reuse of Plattsburgh AFB, pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1993. The mitigation is a stipulation of a Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the U.S. Air Force, the New York State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (October 2000).

Michael Pumphrey  
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### Summary Description of Missile Assembly Shop (Building 3578)

#### **Layout**

At 10,800 square feet of useable space, the Missile Assembly Shop is the largest building in the Weapons Storage Area. It is a one-story, reinforced concrete block building with a flat, 5-ply insulated metal deck roof. The building is irregular in plan, primarily due to three additions. The west façade has an infilled vehicle opening (at the building's north end); to the right of this infilled opening is a personnel door. To the right of the personnel door is another vehicle opening that has been infilled with concrete block. Roughly centered on this façade is a one-story, entrance vestibule of concrete block construction with a flat roof; to its right is a Plexiglas shelter. The south end of the west façade has a large overhead garage door; to its right is a pair of heavy metal doors.

The rear side (east façade) has a series of offsets resulting from various additions made to the building since its construction. Roughly centered on this façade is a vehicle bay addition with overhead garage doors on its north and south walls; to the right of this vehicle bay is an offset section with an overhead garage door. Another overhead garage door is located to the left of the center vehicle bay. The north façade has two personnel doors; a section of this wall has been covered with stucco. The south façade has several vents. The interior of the building was not inspected.

#### **Alterations/Additions**

Building 3578 has had several modifications, including:

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1961 | A 2,117 square-foot reentry vehicle bay was constructed off the south end of the building.  |
| 1976 | A 2,743 square-foot reinforced concrete addition was made to the north end of the building. |
| 1979 | A 1,000 square-foot addition was made to the rear, or east façade.                          |

#### **Function**

This building has had various uses related to missile assembly. In 1961, it was modified to serve as a reentry vehicle building and was used to house those vehicles, penetration aids, payload platforms, and aerodynamic shrouds assembled into reentry packages for Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. In 1968, it was changed into the Missile Assembly Shop and used to prepare Short-Range Air-to-Air Missile (SRAM) weaponry for the transfer and preparation of missiles for operational use by the FB-11A bomber wing. It was also used for performing organization-level maintenance involving component and subsystem replacement, and for organizational, or bench-level maintenance support for certain components.

## Significance

The end of World War II saw the beginning of hostile relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, based on differing social, economic, and political views. As this "Cold War" escalated, the United States instituted a policy of containment, which called for a "peaceful" blocking of the expansion of Soviet political and economic influence. Nuclear weapons, which had also developed at the end of World War II, held a significant place in this conflict, but it was theorized that an American nuclear capability, if strong enough, could deter unwanted soviet expansion.

On March 21, 1946, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was organized as one of the three new major commands in a reorganized Army Air Force. SAC was considered the "big stick" of U.S. National military strength, and was given the responsibility of delivering the atomic weapons. With the motto "peace is our profession" SAC was the physical realization of America's deterrence theory.

The newly established Air Force (established in 1947) embarked upon an expansive Cold War building program to make SAC operable. Air Force bases designated specifically for SAC were identified (or newly constructed) and became the critical instrument in SAC's mission of posing a significant deterrent to enemy aggression. Specially designed facilities were constructed at each of these installations, among which would have to be counted the Missile Assembly Shop.

Building No. 3578 at Plattsburgh AFB was constructed in 1956 to support the SAC weapons delivery mission. It was an essential part of Plattsburgh AFB Cold War era activities and a critical element of SAC bomber operations.

## Drawings

Copies of as-built drawings for the Missile Assembly Shop, Building No. 3578, are archived at:

Air Force Historical Research Agency/ISA  
600 Chennault Circle  
Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6424

## Sources

Tetra Tech, Inc.

1995 *Survey of Cold War-Era Buildings and Structures at Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Clinton County, New York.* Prepared for the U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence, Brooks Air Force Base, Texas.

United States Air Force

1959 Plattsburgh Air Force Base Real Property Accountable Record (1959-1989).

United States Air Force

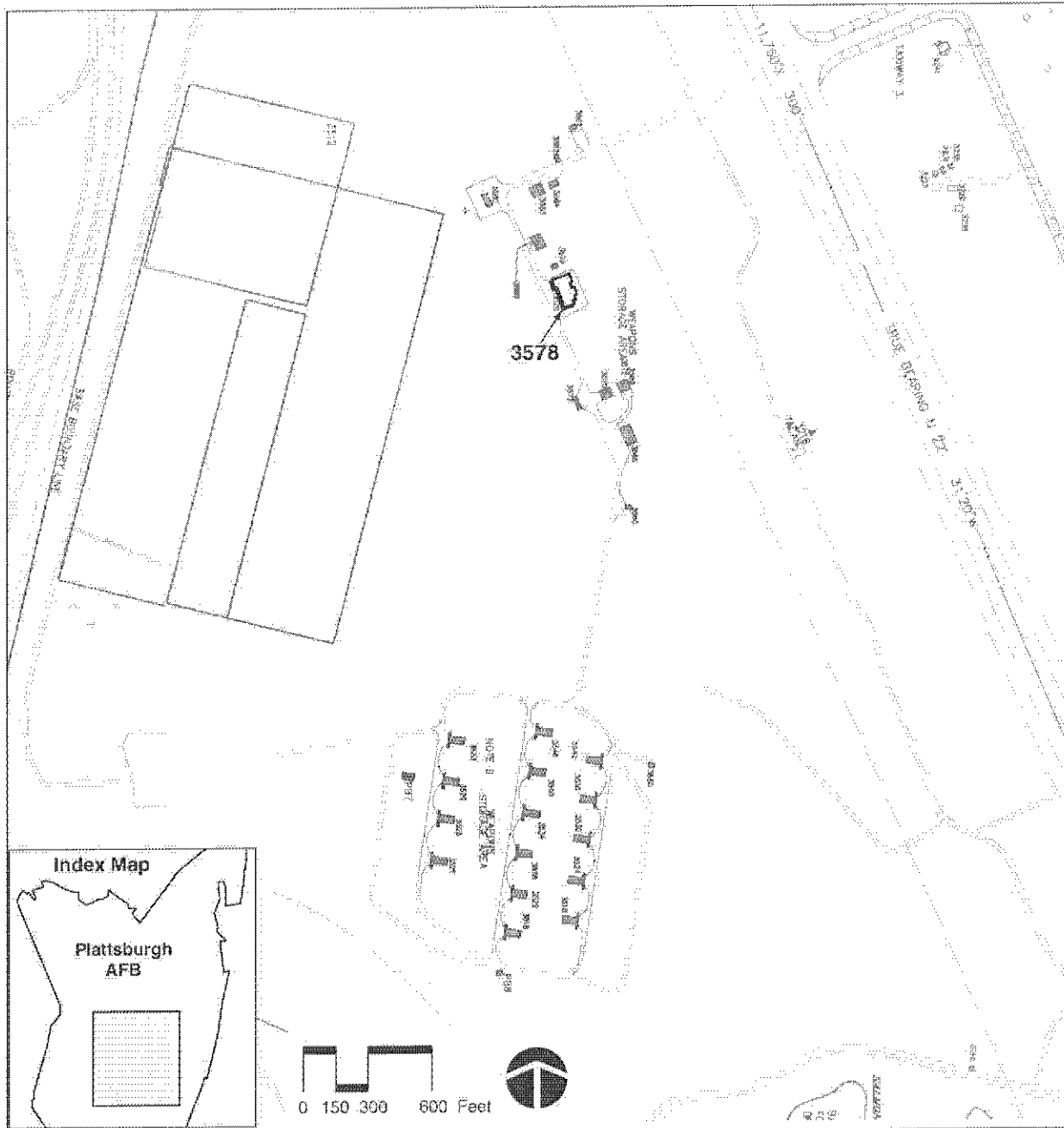
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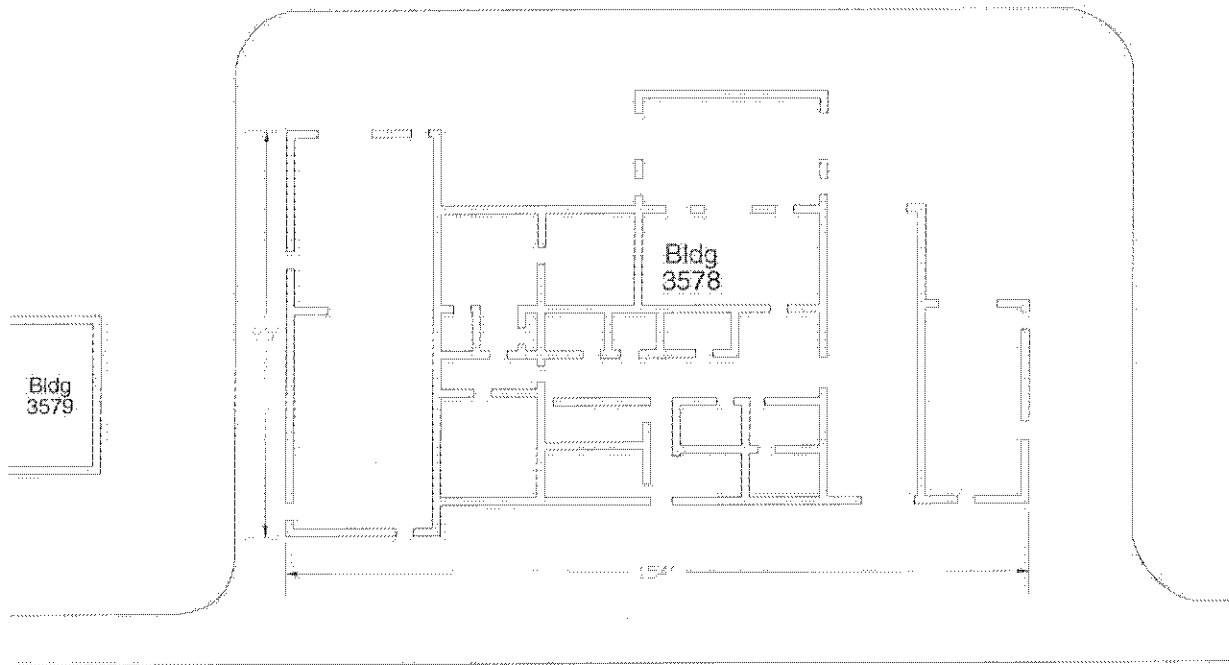
U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence  
1988 Draft Historic Building Inventory and Evaluation Plattsburgh Air Force Base New York,  
Volumes I and II, June.

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Location Map for Missile Assembly Shop, Building No. 3578  
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Sketch not to Scale

SKETCH PLAN - MISSILE ASSEMBLY SHOP  
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 3578)  
(Source: Plattsburgh AFB CAD File, Prepared by the United States Air Force, ca 2000)  
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